

# The Prince of Wales School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113747
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	311357
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan O'Flanagan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Farrington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Maiden Castle Road Dorchester DT1 2HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 257120
<b>Fax number</b>	01305 257121

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<b>Age group</b>	4-9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the degree to which the school meets the needs of pupils of differing ability, but particularly potentially higher attaining pupils
- provision for pupils with physical disabilities and in the Foundation Stage (Nursery unit and Reception)
- how well the outcomes from assessment are used in planning lesson activities
- how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, school assemblies and pupils at lunch and play. Evidence was also gathered from teachers' assessments, pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in equal detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Children's attainment on entry broadly matches that expected for their age, but can vary significantly from year to year. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and includes a high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Eleven of these pupils are enrolled within the school's special unit for physically disabled pupils, but are included fully in classes throughout the school. This unit also contains discrete nursery provision specifically for children with physical disabilities. The school also includes its own pre-school and has very close links with a local community 'Opportunity Group' which shares its facilities. The school holds the following quality marks: Investors in People, Artsmark Silver, Activemark, Healthy School and Extended Schools Status.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school with a distinctive caring, inclusive ethos. It really is a special place where a very talented, impressively committed staff team uses its specialist skills extremely effectively and with empathy to do the very best for the children. Parents are particularly appreciative and supportive of the school. Two typical comments were: 'The child is at the heart of The Prince of Wales School.' 'This school is just wonderful; I can't praise it enough.' Teaching and learning are outstanding. They are typified by their consistent high quality, and the way teachers and their skilled assistants set appropriately high expectations, appreciate pupils' opinions and encourage their independence. As a result, regardless of their differing abilities and needs, pupils feel valued, know what is expected and throw themselves wholeheartedly into their work, which often involves stimulating and practical learning activities. As one little girl excitedly exclaimed, 'We will be allowed to wear our swimming costumes when we put mud on the hut walls!' (in the 'Iron Age Settlement'). Such joy in learning clearly shows why pupils learn so well and also illustrates why teachers are so successful in promoting pupils' personal qualities as effectively as their academic skills. Teachers have been particularly effective this school year in lifting standards in writing, precisely because pupils have so many interesting things to write about. Teachers keep pupils well informed about how to improve their work. Pupils know their individual targets and this contributes very effectively to their successful learning in English and mathematics. However, pupils' self-evaluation is not established as consistently in other subjects.

Pupils are taught and progress exceptionally well in the Foundation Stage (Nursery unit and Reception class) and in other year groups as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities are included equally and achieve outstandingly well. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 4, standards are significantly higher than usually found in English and mathematics, but an increasing number of pupils develop very good speaking, enquiry and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Excellent opportunities to learn practically and to use literacy skills across the curriculum also enable many pupils to develop significant awareness of their local historical heritage.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are extremely good. In response to excellent care, guidance and support pupils are enthusiastic learners and adopt safe, healthy lifestyles very diligently. Behaviour in and out of classes is exemplary. In keeping with the school's caring ethos, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of rights and responsibilities, which is a current school focus, is also very advanced for their age. Assemblies are very special, often emotional and celebratory occasions where staff use music to both inspire and calm pupils, to equally good effect. The staff of the school develop very close links with parents and outside agencies. As a result, all pupils, including those with very complex physical needs, derive great benefit from the expertise and team support provided. This is evident in the pupils' full enjoyment of school and excellent attendance.

The school provides an excellent curriculum for its pupils. Pupils say, 'We enjoy energetic, fun activities and we do them a lot.' Learning activity in all parts of the school is designed to inspire pupils. It is enriched by staff using their high level of skill, ranging from supporting disabled pupils in the hydrotherapy pool to discussing a film of Jason and the Argonauts during a topic on ancient Greece. Such topics promote the pupils' skills, enjoyment and well-being superbly. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT and enquiry skills and an excellent range of extra-curricular and extended school activities. Learning opportunities are provided

within the daily 'breakfast club' and several local and residential visits are planned to ensure that all pupils are included equally. The school's numerous awards reflect these significant strengths within its stimulating provision.

Leadership and management are outstanding. A highly effective unity of purpose permeates the whole school, stemming in large measure from the extremely well considered and encouraging leadership of the headteacher, but supported by all staff and the highly effective governing body. The school has extremely thorough procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance and for creating action plans and setting targets to promote improvement. Leaders and managers complete mid-term assessments very accurately to check that pupils are making sufficient gains. No stone is left unturned in their endeavour to rectify any aspects identified for improvement. They provide additional and precisely targeted support, as needed, to maintain a momentum of improvement in pupils' academic and personal progress and to sustain enjoyment and well-being. Their leadership in sustaining high quality provision and providing exciting learning opportunities reflects continuing strengths. In addition, this year senior managers, by lifting standards in writing and ensuring that higher attainers as well as other pupils reach their potential, show an excellent capacity to improve into the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. As in other year groups, excellent leadership ensures that children benefit from high quality teaching, stimulating learning opportunities and exemplary care, guidance and support. As a result, children's achievement is outstanding across all areas of learning, especially their personal development and well-being. By the end of their Reception Year, standards are above average. Teachers and their assistants develop excellent links with the pre-school, between the Nursery unit and Reception class, and with parents. Their specialist skills, empathy and close co-operation with outside agencies enable them to include children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very effectively. Teachers provide an optimum balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors. Indoor and outdoor facilities are extremely well resourced and organised to create exciting areas where all children enjoy successful learning. The way children learn with and from each other, for example when using computers, is a particularly exemplary feature.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Across the range of subjects, develop pupils' involvement in evaluating their own work to match the effectiveness of such learning activity in English and mathematics.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Prince of Wales School, Dorchester DT1 2HH

It was a privilege and a real pleasure to visit your school. Your friendliness towards each other and with visitors to the school clearly showed that you thoroughly enjoy coming to school. We enjoyed our visit too. We would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly members of the school council. We were very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. We agree with you and with many of your parents, who feel that this is an outstanding school.

These are the main things we found.

- You make outstanding progress and the standards you reach in Year 4 are much higher than in most schools.
- You really enjoy school; this is because you have excellent learning activities and learn happily with and from each other; you are very knowledgeable about how to live healthily and safely and contribute very enthusiastically to your school and community.
- Teaching is excellent because the teachers and their assistants are very skilled; the way you are encouraged to learn so enjoyably by doing practical work is a particularly impressive feature.
- Staff work closely with your parents and other people; they get to know you very well and because of this they care for you extremely well, especially those of you who need extra support.
- Your headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school very well indeed.

To help the school to improve and because you do it so well in English and mathematics, we have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities across the range of subjects to consider for yourselves how well you are doing and what you need to do next to make your work even better.

Please keep helping each other.

Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector

**Annex B**

13 February 2008

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Lead inspector